2005 AmeriCorps Concept Paper Instructions

What Is AmeriCorps?

All across America, AmeriCorps Members are *getting things done* for their communities.

AmeriCorps, the domestic Peace Corps, engages citizens of all ages in projects ranging from tutoring, youth mentoring, public safety, housing rehabilitation, health care, environmental issues, and disaster relief. It gives communities and neighborhoods valuable human resources for addressing their most pressing civic issues, and gives the individual a way to serve their country by reaching out to others within their own or another community. It has given over 100,000 Americans opportunities to increase their skills and earn money for college that otherwise would not have been available to them.

AmeriCorps has been described as "a mission, not a program". Organizations must be extremely committed to service and willing to dedicate staff towards program administration. AmeriCorps challenges its Members to stretch themselves and grow as human beings. It also challenges its sponsoring organizations to move beyond status quo and find new ways of effectively serving their communities. Additional information and resources can be found on the web at www.americorps.org.

Who Can Apply

Any not-for-profit organization, local or state government, school district, or institution of higher education may sponsor an AmeriCorps program. AmeriCorps Members serve for one year, full time (1,700 hours) or part time (900, 675, 450 or 300 hours). At the completion of their service commitment they receive a $4,725 education award (less for part time service) that may be redeemed at a Title IV university, college, or trade school. Most AmeriCorps Members receiving a living allowance while serving, although it varies with the type of program. In 2005-06, a full time living allowance will equal $10,600. The living allowance is optional for part-time Members.

There are two kinds of AmeriCorps programs.

The **AmeriCorps*State program** provides Federal funds equaling up to approximately $12,400 per Member for living allowances and program administration. Sponsoring organizations are required to produce a non-federal cash match of at least $2,000 per Member, and should have sufficient capacity to operate personnel and accounting systems, comply with Federal grant provisions, and respond to Federal reporting requirements. Federal funds can be used to hire additional staff, but sponsors should nonetheless be prepared to absorb some program responsibilities into its own systems.

The **AmeriCorps Education Award Program** provides only a small amount of Federal monies ($400 per Member) for administrative purposes. However, it also frees sponsors from match requirements. Living allowances are not required, though Members may still receive a living allowance if the sponsor chooses to provide one and has an alternative source of funding. Education Award programs are particularly well suited to work study and workforce development initiatives. Members serving under the AmeriCorps Education Award Program receive the same Education Award as those serving under AmeriCorps*State initiatives.

All AmeriCorps programs fall into one of five issue areas: Education, Environment, Human Services, Public Safety or Homeland Security. In addition, the Missouri Community Service Commission has identified the following Missouri AmeriCorps Funding Priorities for 2005:

- Regional - While the Program Committee will review proposals from all areas of the state, preference for new programs will be given to areas of the state that are currently un-served or underserved. These are areas north of the Missouri River, the Bootheel and South Central Missouri.
- In addition, preference will be given to areas whose school districts have or are in danger of losing their accreditation.

The Corporation for National and Community Service, which funds AmeriCorps nationally, also prioritizes programs that serve children and youth. All AmeriCorps programs must create objectives with measurable outcomes that result in positive impacts on the communities they serve.

How To Apply

The Missouri AmeriCorps application process begins with the concept paper. The concept paper very succinctly and very precisely identifies the proposed project, the needs it addresses, the activities Members will be engaged in and the number of Members requested. Applicants also describe their organizational capacity for administering an AmeriCorps program, and identify the source(s) of necessary program support, including non-federal match when required.

Planning Grants: For 2005, the Commission will also consider funding no more than two Planning Grants of up to $15,000 to build the capacity of an organization or community to design and administer an AmeriCorps*State project to begin in the fall of 2006. *Planning Grants will be available ONLY for applicants proposing to address the Commission's 2005 Regional Funding priority stated above.* Additional Planning Grant requirements include a 50% cash or in-kind match, development of a community volunteer center, and participation in at least quarterly Commission-sponsored meetings, training and events.

Planning Grant Concept Paper Narrative Instructions: A narrative not to exceed 5 pages describing:

1. The specific compelling need to be addressed by an AmeriCorps program;
2. How the applicant proposes to involve a diverse group of participants in planning an AmeriCorps program to meet the identified need;
3. How the applicant proposes to effectively use the resources of the Commission, the Corporation and other technical assistance providers, programs, meetings and events in the program development process;
4. How a volunteer center will benefit the community;
5. How grant funds will be used to build the capacity of the organization and/or community to establish a community volunteer center as a component of the AmeriCorps program;
6. What current or proposed staff (positions and percent of time devoted) will be available to support the planning process; and
7. A list of all proposed agencies and organizations to be involved in the planning, development and administration/management of the community volunteer center.
8. A completed Financial and Administrative Survey (attached) MUST be included with your concept paper submission.

Please don't hesitate to contact the Commission for more information
Missouri Community Service Commission
P.O. Box 118
Truman State Office Building
301 W. High Street, Room 770
Jefferson City, MO 65102
(573) 751-7488 fax-(573) 526-0463
Toll-free 877-210-7611
www.movolunteers.org
americorps@ded..mo.gov

Concept papers must be received in Commission offices, Harry S Truman State Office Building, 301 W. High Street, Room 770, P.O. Box 118, Jefferson City MO 65102, by 3 p.m., January 7, 2005.

All concept papers received by the stated deadline will be reviewed by a team of peers and commission Members and feedback provided based on the following criteria:

- The extent to which the proposed program meets identifiable community need;
- The capacity of the proposed program to show successful impact in the community;
- The identifiable capacity of the applicant to effectively administer an AmeriCorps program, including adherence to programmatic and fiscal requirements;
- Strength of the proposal's Member recruitment plan;
- The degree to which the proposed program addresses state and national priorities.

The concept paper process is not designed as a "qualifying" round, but rather a method of developing strong AmeriCorps proposals and programs. Applicants are asked to address any issues raised by concept paper feedback and to work with Commission staff and/or free technical assistance providers in developing a final AmeriCorps proposal.

Full proposals with detailed narrative requirements will be due in on April 20, 2005. If selected for funding, AmeriCorps programs may begin as early as August 1, 2005.

Where to Find Technical Assistance

AmeriCorps is a rewarding, though complex program that requires close attention to detail. Fortunately, there are a number of ways for a potential sponsor to receive technical assistance and advice as they work to design their program and submit their concept paper for review.

The staff of the Missouri Community Service Commission strongly encourages everyone considering an AmeriCorps initiative to contact them toll-free at 877-210-7611, or visit our web site at http://www.movolunteers.org. Our staff can help you decide if your organization is better suited to the AmeriCorps*State or the AmeriCorps Education Award Program, which issue area best fits your organization's mission, whether your program design is most appropriate for full or part time Members, and how to create measurable objectives that show impact in the community.

Additional information and resources for AmeriCorps programs nationwide can be found on the Corporation's web site at www.americorps.org.

One Original and 12 copies of the Title Page, Narrative (not to exceed 5 pages) and Financial and Administrative Survey must be <u>received</u> no later than 3:00 p.m. on Friday, January 7, 2005.

Missouri Community Service Commission
2005 Missouri AmeriCorps
Concept Paper Title Page

Sponsoring Organization:

Organization Name:

_____

Contact Person:

_____

Title:

_____

Address:

_____

City/State/Zip:

_____

Telephone: _____ Fax: _____

_____

E-mail address: (note – all AmeriCorps programs must have access to the Internet at the time of the program's start date)

_____

Federal Employer Identification No (FEIN): _____

Proposal Type

Does this concept paper propose (check ONE):

☐ An AmeriCorps*State program that provides Members with a living allowance, receives Federal dollars up to $12,400 per full-time (or equivalent) Member and requires a non-Federal cash match at least $2,000 per full-time equivalent Member.

☐ A Planning Grant of up to $15,000 to build the capacity of an organization or community to develop and administer an AmeriCorps*State program to begin in the fall of 2006. Applicants must address one of the Commission's 2005 Regional Funding priority areas.

☐ An AmeriCorps Education Awards Program that provides Federal dollars up to $400 per full time (or equivalent) Member, but requires no living allowance and no local match.

Issue Area

Which ONE issue area will this program address (check ONLY ONE):

☐ Education ☐ Public Safety

☐ Environment ☐ Homeland Security

☐ Human Needs

Members

How many Members will be recruited under the proposed program?

_____ Full Time _____ Half Time _____ Reduced Half Time
(1700 hrs) (900 hrs) (675 hrs)

_____ Quarter Time _____ Minimum Time
(450 hrs) (300 hours)

**Missouri Community Service Commission
2005 Missouri AmeriCorps
Concept Paper Narrative Instructions**

The Missouri AmeriCorps Concept Paper is intended to provide a brief but precise description of the proposed project. **Narrative length must not exceed five pages**. Please use the following outline to describe the proposed program. *Planning Grant applicants should use narrative instructions on page 2 of this document.*

A. Need
  1. What specific compelling need is to be addressed by this project?
  2. Who identified the need for this project? By what process?
B. Objectives/Activities
  1. How will the identified need be addressed through the service provided by AmeriCorps Members?
  2. How will success be measured? How was this level of success identified and by whom?
C. Member Recruitment, Development, Supervision and Support
  1. From what target area(s) or background(s) do you expect to recruit AmeriCorps Members?
  2. What types of training will be provided to AmeriCorps Members?
  3. How will AmeriCorps Members be trained, supervised and supported?
D. Organizational Capacity
  1. What current or proposed staff (positions and percent of time devoted) will be available to support the administration of this program (processing Member forms, progress reports, financial reports, etc.)?
  2. What current or proposed staff (positions and percent of time devoted) will be available to supervise, support and train AmeriCorps Members?
E. Local Support, Partnerships and other Program Resources
  1. Provide a summary or list of all agencies and organizations involved in the planning, development and proposed administration/management of the proposed AmeriCorps program.
  2. Include the expected contributions of each partner organization (included both cash and in-kind contributions, leadership, planning, etc.)
  3. A completed Financial and Administrative Survey (attached) MUST be included with your concept paper submission.
NOTE: If proposing an AmeriCorps*State program, sufficient cash match must be available to support the proposed number of Members listed on the 2005 Concept Paper Title Page.

Concept Papers must be <u>received</u> in the office of the Missouri Community Service Commission by 3 p.m. Friday, January 7, 2005

**Submission Requirements: 1 original and 12 copies of:
Concept Paper Title Page, Financial and Administrative Survey and Concept Paper Narrative (not to exceed 5 pages)**

Please don't hesitate to contact the Commission for more information
**Missouri Community Service Commission
P.O. Box 118
Truman State Office Building
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Jefferson City, MO 65102
(573) 751-7488 fax-(573) 526-0463
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<table>
<tr><td colspan="3">Missouri Community Service Commission
2005 Missouri AmeriCorps
Financial and Administrative Survey</td></tr>
</table>

Organization Name:

_____

Contact Person:

_____

Title:

_____

Address:

_____

City/State/Zip:

_____

Telephone: _____ Fax: _____

_____

Federal Employer Identification No (FEIN): _____

A. General Information	**YES**	**NO**
1. Has your organization received a federal grant or cost-type award in the last 2 years? If yes, what is your cognizant federal agency?_____		
• Attach a schedule showing the total federal dollars awarded to your organization, by granting agency, for the two most recently completed fiscal years.	**Attach schedule**	
2. Has your organization been audited by a Certified Public Accounting firm within the past two years?		
3. Are there established policies related to salary scales, fringe benefits, travel reimbursement and personnel policies?		
4. If so, would these policies conflict with regulations regarding the AmeriCorps grant or AmeriCorps Members?		
5. Does your organization plan to use existing staff to manage the AmeriCorps program? If so, which position(s)?_____. _____		
B. Financial Management	**YES**	**NO**
1. Do you have a "job cost" or "fund based" accounting system?		
2. Is your organization's accounting system a manual system?		
An automated system?		
A combination of manual and automated systems?		
3. Are entries posted to the general ledger daily?		
Weekly?		

	YES	NO
Monthly?		
Other? Please describe:_____		
4. Does the accounting system track completely and accurately the receipt and disbursement of funds by each grant or funding source?		
5. Are common or indirect costs accumulated into cost pools for allocation to projects, contracts and grants?		
6. Does your organization have a federally approved indirect cost rate? If so, please attach.		
7. Does the accounting system provide for the recording of actual grant/contract costs according to categories of your approved budget(s), and provide for complete and current disclosure?		
8. Are time and activity distribution records maintained by funding source and project for each employee to account for total hours (100%) devoted to your organization?		
9. Is your organization familiar with federal cost principles?		
10. Is your organization familiar with procedures for the determination and allowance of costs in connection with federal grants and contracts?		
11. Does your accounting system allow for the recording of "in-kind" contributions?		
12. Does your accounting system allow for cash basis reporting?		
13. If your organization uses accrual basis accounting, are there procedures in place to allow for reconciliation between cash and accrual basis reports?		
C. Internal Controls	**YES**	**NO**
1. Are the duties of the bookkeeper/record keeper separate from cash functions (receipts, deposits, check signing/releasing)?		
2. Are checks signed by individual(s) whose duties exclude recording cash received, approving vouchers for payment and the preparation of payroll?		
3. Are purchase approval methods documented and communicated?		
4. Are all accounting entries (both cash and in-kind) supported by appropriate documentation?		
5. Are employee payroll reports supported by appropriately signed documentation (timesheets, leave slips, etc.)?		
6. Are employees who handle funds bonded against loss by reasons of fraud or dishonesty?		

Prepared by: (Signature)_____

Typed Name and Title: _____

Date: _____Telephone/Fax: _____ /_____

E-mail: _____